

How Each MBTI Type Reacts to Meaningless Compliments (Draft 1)

For those who are curious, for those who would like to help out, and for those who want to share any insights they think I might have missed. I'll revise it later.

https://www.reddit.com/r/INTP/comments/1l80jre/a_question_for_intps/mxlrpi8/

We will start by defining the term “meaningless” in this context as a compliment that quite plainly contains no legitimate truth.

The meaningless compliments I gave were all appearance-based compliments. This is obviously impossible for me to know, because A. I would have no way of knowing who exactly would see my post before I posted it, and B. I do not know what any of these people look like.

I decided on this sort of post because I had seen plenty of them in other subreddits and I was curious to see how certain types would take it in contrast with other types. I figured it was harmless because people have said these sorts of things before, and it didn't mean anything then, so it won't mean anything now.

To ensure I'm not being too unethical or weird, I will quickly skim each subreddit for the adjectives “beautiful,” “sexy,” “attractive,” and “hot,” to see if anyone has done this before. If yes, I will not look at the reception nor will I look too closely at the post, but I will check the length of the post to determine how much I should write.

I will only post if others have posted similar meaningless compliments before.

ESFJ: Despite being the most curious about this type, I got no response. I'm guessing because this type is mostly offline. It could also be that they are more inherently aware of the meaninglessness behind such compliments since they tend to be the ones who dole them out the most. In my experience, these compliments are most heard from the mouths of Fe-doms, although it often sounds like they really think they mean it. This is baffling to me, and something I will have to conduct more thorough research on to understand.

ESTP: I predicted the exact sort of answer that two of the top comments gave (before any brigading). “I know, right.” And,

“God owed me a favor, case solved. Kidding aside, I think our stereotypical strong self-confidence, earned or not, can make us look superficially attractive to others.”

The style of comment I was expecting was that of “Why, yes, you're so right! But on a real note...” I find that— in my experience with Fi-seventh types, when they're given compliments they might perceive as too sincere or unearned, they tend to accept it confidently first and then “level with you,” as if they're trying to soften or lower your expectations of their skill while still maintaining the God-like aura of confidence. Parallel conversations, but only if you can see it.

Someone called me out for “Glaze,”* which is, of all types, most expected from an ESTP, but I interpret it from them as “thank you.” Another gave me a similar comment to the style of comment I was expecting, but phrased differently— without maintaining the God-like aura.

“Because you didn't care to check the MBTI of the mediocre looking people you know ;) We keep our MBTI our whole life, so that elderly neighbour with a wart o[n] their nose might be ESTP too, but you would never know that.”

Sage wisdom, which is to be expected of most mature xSTPs. I wish I had been able to post on r/ISTP before the brigading.

* Extreme, over-the-top, or undeserved praise or flattery.

ENTP: Being an Fi-seventh type, I predicted the same sort of response from the ENTPs as I did from the ESTPs. “Why, yes, you’re so right! But on a real note...” in order to maintain the God-like aura they feel they can spin from each compliment.

“It’s lonely being this attractive. Either people - often of the same sex - tell you how attractive you are (mostly female to female interactions, not sure if this happens in male circles) and people of the opposite sex are too intimidated, shy or simply annoyed and frustrated by our attractiveness that they don’t approach.”

This response was interesting to me because of how laden with sadness it is despite it likely being a joke. There’s a lot of truth and dislike of what many people might see as true positives. I find it interesting that of all types, it is ExTPs who seem to be concerned with ensuring I’ve not taken my compliment too seriously, and urge me to remember that there’s not much to be complimenting. It makes me think that these types are genuinely used to getting routinely complimented— more than other types.

This sentence doesn’t mean that a member of an individual type is incapable of being complimented more, but it might imply that on average, humans enjoy the ExTP personality more than some others. It at least implies that humans feel more inclined to compliment this personality type more than others, likely due to the extroverted and highly open nature xxxP types and high Pe (Se/Ne) types seem to naturally adopt.

Finally, I don’t know if most ENTPs think that my compliment itself is serious, but they might at least assume I think I’m being serious about it to some degree.

ESFP: I had few expectations from the ESFP. I figured perhaps some boredom or craving something more, something substantial.

(My predictions were inconclusive because I did not really receive much. They could just be offline.)

I also didn't think many would see the post.

The top comment was "Well, that's just, like, your opinion, man." In hindsight, this response is quite xSFP/Gamma Quadra. Live and let live. I'm entitled to my opinion, just as you are to yours. (Upon closer inspection, I realize this responder was not even an ESFP but an ISFP, so, point still stands.)

A flaired ESFP responded saying, "I appreciate that a lot! But what do you find attractive in us?" This question is phrased in such a warm way that most people would feel inclined to respond.

At this point, I had already read some of the xNFP outrage and determined it was a high-Fi thing to be annoyed or pissed off at, so I told them what I really appreciate about them.

ENFJ: This sub had the first person to go to my page and see what's going on.

"Why are you posting this on every sub?"

The rest of the responders were either trying to give me a legitimate answer, of a flirty nature, or joking around. Most of the commenters were not ENFJ, and then the post got taken down. This makes me think that there's a chance someone reported it. This is the behaviour I also expect from r/ENTJ. Unfortunately, I could not post there, so this will have to work as a temporary placeholder.

ENFP: These results were mostly tainted by r/INFP since most people saw it after INFPs started to display signals of anger. The top comment was,

“You say this to the other types! **jealousetrayal.**”

This is obviously a joke, but it does speak to the general sentiment seemingly shared by each of the Fi types. They feel extreme betrayal when someone shares their feelings with them but also with other people. Fe types don’t seem to feel that betrayal, more a sense of confusion until they figure out why that’s happening.

Another interesting thing that I’m aware Fi does is overcorrect when it assumes it’s not safe to share its true self. An ENFP who saw my ENTP flair before reading the post replied like this:

“I know, some of us ENFPs are the real shit out there. The power of our Ne fueled by our greater cognitive abilities and combined with strong emotional intelligence makes us the most terrific badasses you could ever meet in a lifetime. We are truly the chosen people of God. If other types read this and get jealous, just cry harder whinies, because WDGAF anymore.”

If you’ll remember from the ExTP section, this is clearly somebody trying to emulate that ExTP style of confidence but falling short because of the overpresence of Fi— present in the sentence’s structure as the necessitation of belief in any part of the statement to confidently make it. When the Fi user does not truly believe their statement, it seems almost *required* of them to phrase it with visibly bitter words. It’s as if they’re fighting against the mistruths of the sentence itself.

In response to me, they admitted, “I saw that you said the same stuff to other types. Apologize right now and admit that we ENFPs are the real aristocratic class.”

Most high-Fi types need to admit it as soon as possible when they’d been what they themselves see as deceitful, because being true to the self is of utmost importance. This is typically only done when the situation or person is safe enough to show their true self to, or, if being deceitful did not attain the desired result. “Safety” as it relates to showing Fi depends on the individual Fi user’s experiences as some confident Fi users don’t seem to have much of a concept of this.

Funnily enough, as I finish drafting this, I received another comment similar to the above where an ENFP, in an environment they’ve deemed unsafe for Fi, **writes in a bitter way** while trying to be disingenuous but **cannot resist being honest**, lest I mistake their comment for legitimate. This is a sign to me that Fi types see this sort of betrayal as truly hurtful, hence why this user **couldn’t even bring herself to let me reasonably mistake her contempt for support in the slightest.**

It’s interesting that despite these ragey signals she’s sending and the fact that she called her delivery disingenuous, **I think she gave me an honest answer** that she likely would have elaborated on if this post were (somehow) “serious.”

This is another sign to me that this is truly a betrayal to Fi types. I am thoroughly convinced of this at this point. I just need to find out why so I can better empathise.

“Well something’s definitely driving you *crazy*. The all caps along with the abundance of question marks alone would drive me crazy

If you actually want an answer to your question you shouldn’t ask us. Ask someone who is under the impression that **“ENFPs are sooo totally attractive yasss gurllllllll!”** (fuck is that enough exclamation marks??? idk how to come off more disingenuous whoops you gotta teach me)”

I think she also sees that **mimicked delivery** as fair game to make fun of because she knows it’s not how I really speak, which is something I do genuinely appreciate about ENFPs.

^Even during times of anger at or disgust in someone, they still won’t make fun of you for being you. They tend to respect the Fi that much. There are exceptions, for sure, but as a rule, I think that’s gotta be part of why they’ve remained one of my favourite types throughout the years.

Other ENFPs seemingly understood that it's not a real compliment but gave me responses anyway. This is what I would consider "the **normal, expected** response," regardless of type. Any response who seems like they took my words too personally is not normal or expected and anyone who ignores it, like the "Glaze" comment, is also not **normal** or **expected**.
(I am the one conducting the experiment, so I make the rules. You guys just wanted to read along.)

Of the normal, expected responses included:

Trying to Figure it Out— only as seriously as I am

"Instinctual joie de vivre and the controversial talent that is the ability to yap about any and everything."

"Its because im always myself and it makes me radiant"

"curiosity + charisma + confidence = triple threat"

Objective Consideration

"I think Ne gives us a joy for life. ENFPs are excited about the world in a way most other people are not."

I notice that a lot of these answers both seem genuine and detachedly accurate, meaning they have a decent awareness of the way their type is perceived. Perhaps ENFPs' heightened awareness also means that they think about their perception more and take (good and bad) feedback on it more than other types.

This sort of response also means they interpreted my question as being a general appreciation of the type— which I assumed everyone would have (I was incorrect)— and are likely taking their "most ENFP traits" and— similar to INTPs— cross-referencing it with what's commonly said about ENFPs (to make such a non-specific compliment reasonably about them?

(ETHICAL DILEMMA: Honestly, this sort of post is REALLY so lazy when you think about it because you're forcing people to compliment themselves... Or, actually, maybe it's a net positive because you're forcing people to compliment themselves. HMM. Much to think about.)

It's also interesting that so many of the responses lie in a pseudo-authentic territory, so if the intention was to make fun, it will immediately fail, and if the intention is to be genuine, it can easily succeed.

I believe INFPs might think they're doing something similar.
I will have to do more research on this.

There was some Denial (I wasn't expecting much of this)

"Because you haven't met me, I'm incredibly mid." (From someone who's not 100% sure they're an ENFP)

"I'm not." (From a flaired ENFP who says she's just depressed right now.) I wonder if this means she usually sees herself in a better light.

And some Genuine Appreciation

Some ENFPs fully went with this being a sweet compliment and responded like so:

"Lol awe, fr?? Don't make me blush, it's too early for this!"

Lol but fr, thank u, that's so kind, and I kinda needed some positivity lately. I appreciate ur kind words! Have a beautiful day :)"

Responses like these made me think more critically about the ethics of this experiment. I had absolutely no idea that people would take it seriously, and seeing these ENFPs taking even such a meaningless compliment so heartily and joyfully made me reconsider so obviously posting so many at a time, especially considering high Fi users tend to find it so hurtful. I need to better understand why they find it hurtful before I make any major changes to my own moral code, though.

Even more interestingly, *two* ENFPs separately DMed me to thank me for the post. I wonder why they DMed me. They might have done it because they didn't want to publicly support me or because they wanted to more personally show me their appreciation. I wonder if direct questioning will get me an honest answer one way or the other.

INTP: Ah, INTPs. A number of you might just actually deserve that compliment after all.

Of all types, INTPs had *the* most universally positive response to every single part of the experiment. Not only did they appreciate the compliment in most cases, but there were several jokes and fun conversations occurring underneath the threads. Despite having posted in six other subreddits at this point with almost identical titles, most INTPs either didn't check (doubtful, considering how many upvotes and comments it had) or didn't care (likely, considering they're INTPs).

This was the first subreddit I said it was an experiment on.

I predicted a lot of questions and a lot of subtle prodding for more compliments, and I received both. I predicted some puns and received more than I was expecting. I did not expect as much denial as I received, but I didn't think of that too much at all. Not because it doesn't happen, but I wasn't thinking of it that much. I more so considered that for INFPs.

Of all types, you found it most interesting that it was an experiment. I wish I could have included INTJs, but the INFPs would have brigaded too quickly.

INTPs were also most receptive to me being in your community as an (ENTP) outsider. I notice that in the xNFP communities, my comments are being downvoted in xNFP solidarity regardless of the content, meanwhile here, they seem to be up/downvoted based on productivity to the conversation or to the vibe. This might suggest that Fi is more prone to holding grudges, or that this is universally seen by high-Fi types as a big betrayal. I wonder what would happen if I had posted on r/ISFP sooner, too.

I got a lot of objective acceptance as if you are an object separate from yourself,

A lot of theorizing because you'd likely been called attractive for certain reasons and had asked/thought about why before:

“My drama teacher used me as an example for the class of facial symmetry. You can have otherwise bad or mediocre features, but symmetry is a pretty pungent secret sauce for being mystically good-looking. But as to your question, quiet people are mysterious. Which is good if you exude a bit of normalcy, but quite bad if people think you're weird. It's a wedge shearing people into opposite extremes.”

“We tend to think before speaking, for one. We value social harmony but not above the truth, so some people might not like that but it could make others see us as more genuine. Plus as introverts we let other people talk more -, at least in the beginning and people tend to assume you're a good listener if you let them talk.”

and a lot of joking acceptance as if you were an ENTP. Typically through GIFs, interestingly:

“I know I'm just a pretty face. And hair.”

“Some might even say 'dashing!'” GIF text: “He's a friggin' Adonis.”

From these responses, I think it likely that INTPs think about what people around them call attractive and then cross-reference those answers with their own traits to get an objective analysis on why

people find them attractive/why they are attractive without feeling the urge to counter or deny the claim if enough of their traits do truly align with what's said to be "attractive."

There was indeed some denial:

"Bold of you to assume I'm attractive to anyone."

"You clearly haven't met me."

"Where the hell did you get that from? if anything we are probably the least attractive out of any type
😂"

"You think so? I've never met anyone who found me attractive."

"should have gone to specsavers."

There was hardly ANY simple acceptance without at least a hint of a joke. There was one "Thanks~ heheheh 🥰❤️" from a flaired INTP, and that's it.

Some people were just trying to figure it out, like they did on r/ENFJ:

"Are we? Like as a whole? Is it a physical thing or a vibe thing?"

INTP 2: "has to be [a] vibe thing."

INTP 3: "Case by case deal, I think."

Although, to me, this reads a tiny bit like subtly asking for more and more specific compliments.

Each time a thread like this is posted, INTPs do seem to subtly beg for more compliments. A few comments from the denial section fit that bill, but comments similar to:

"I'm attractive?"

Are typically present in these threads. There were not many in this one, but that could be for many reasons. Maybe if I were more consistent in affirming these, there would be more. (Because people love a free compliment, I'm learning.)

INFP: The INFPs had the most surprising response to me. I had no clue anybody would take the compliments so seriously considering it's impossible to be serious about them. Neither did I assume that they would see me posting the same compliment to other subreddits as such a betrayal considering we are perfect strangers.

Once I realized they saw it as a betrayal, though, I knew it was inevitable that they— in an attempt to serve justice— would be totally unforgiving of anything I said and brigade other posts to “defend” other people from my “betrayal,” ironically only making other people upset who wouldn't otherwise be.

It was interesting to see the vibe on each post slowly go from curiosity and confusion and pleasant reception to confusion and anger or annoyance.

It's also interesting to see INFPs signalling that they are disappointed now because of the knowledge of the lack of “legitimacy” in the appreciation.
(I guess legitimacy means exclusivity to high-Fi types?)

Second top comment:

“Are you experimenting to see which MBTI type will notice that you made the same type of post to a bunch of other MBTI types? Lol”

INFP 2: “Awww that sucks, I as a random person reading this was so flattered 😂”

INFP 3: “That's pretty annoying tbh. I hate insincere flattery” (As if they assume this compliment could have been sincere to begin with.)

I cannot tell how serious they were being. It seems like they were attempting a balanced response, like ENFPs did, but exclusively gave off signals of being annoyed or irritated or betrayed or hurt rather than displaying potential ambivalence like ExxPs are often able to.

I also can't tell if they're being serious about the degree of dislike for such actions because they will word things as if they care a lot, sending signals of caring, and then say that they don't. Regardless of which one's true, it'd be clearer to dictate your feelings in the message, so the tone isn't so often misread.

Similarly, I can't tell how serious they are about how much they'd like it if they were truly seen by me (a perfect stranger) as special. Perhaps they just want to be seen as special by everyone who perceives them and any exception is seen as a disturbance or perhaps, they don't care in the slightest and it's a joke to give off signals of being offended or jealous.

Maybe the joke is playing with emotions, but then what's the difference between what I did and what they did other than the fact that they know they're doing it? Or maybe neither of us know that we're playing with people's emotions, then what's wrong with what either party has done? Once these questions have answers that make sense, I'll be able to make sense of this mindset.

“[I] appreciate that our pixels are better than others pixels but you probably say that to everyone and don't even mean it so 🤔 your pixels [aren't] even that good either

Obviously, this is a joke, but I wonder if the sentiment behind it has any legitimacy.
It was followed by:

“Uh spread joy would be if it was genuine but unfortunately it’s just an experiment, and yes it does make it a whole lot better than only INFP get pixel [privileges].”

“I felt kinda special until i saw OP posts on other MBTI groups.”

INFP in response: “[checks OPs history]

OK, but they just feel that way about NFP types. That's ok, isn't it? (??? wdyam “ok”?)

[checks further]

OK, just NP types

[checks even further]

N types?

[keeps digging]

crap!” (← **jealousy signals. Even if not actually jealous, these are the signals being sent. How real is this?**)

There were far more responses I would not consider **normal & expected**, but of those that were included:

Jokes, ignoring the whole compliment (reasonable and expected & a good way of determining legitimacy/how much it’s meant by the person)

“Hmm. This reminds me of msgs from dudes like this:

You are stunning!

lb4askingnforndudes Lol”

Simple Acceptance

“It’s cause I got jokes innit?”

"Oh shut up you enfj/ enfj. 🙄🙄" (Translated as “Thank you.”)

“Oh! Thank you.~ I'm just a passionate old soul with a youthful aura that wants to dance through life. While also finding someone who wants to dance with me. (◡‿◡)☆”

Genuine/“Hard-Earned” Acceptance

“Normally, I'd dismiss such a wide-cast compliment and insist myself the exception. But that's a defense I may be better without... So you know what?

Thank you. 😊”

“I spent half my life believing I wasn't attractive because other people decided it. So I decided for myself that I am. And so it is.”

Neutral Personal Replies to Information Presented

“I dunno, I just like that rugged bastard in the mirror.

Not like it ever brought any success in any field though, Im perpetually single.”

Denial

“I see myself as the ugliest guy in collage thanks”

“LIES!!!”

“I think i will actually die virgin 🙄 happy pride 🏳️ best month to find a boyfriend

*i will not find him”

“i think i a person who is waaaaayyy too far from it but thank you XD though i think healthy INFP's are amazing! ^^ (i think im a unhealthy one)”

“Are you sure you didn’t change a letter accidentally?”

Genuine Answers, Trying to Figure it Out (why INFPs are seen as attractive)

“If you're serious, do you mean physically or personality-wise?”

“I think for quite a few INFPs, our base self confidence tends to be quite low because we're noticeably different and are very aware of it. It is the source of what makes us special, however. Doubling down on it and growing more confident in it really has made me deem myself more attractive. Plus... I've been getting feedback from the outside world that I indeed may be more attractive. Confidence really attracts.” (Interesting that people here tend to write with a much more personal tint than ENFPs do.)

Likely Tainted Responses (‘cause I think it’s funny):

“Ok, go talk to some trees.”

“Wtf are you well...? Because you sound high” (Possibly not tainted)

This one jumped out at me immediately as not being an INFP-style response until I read it closer and realized they’re doing the same thing as the ENFPs: overcorrecting because they feel unsafe/a betrayal:

“I know exactly how attractive I am. I learned that within the first month of using grindr. And tinder. And all the rest. Those feelings have stuck close ever since. I know who I am inside. But only the ones desperate enough to look closer bother to let me know. And usually I'm not attracted to them or they already have bfs or they live 300 miles away and don't want commitment. 🙄 I can rationalize 15 ways to Sunday to point out that I'm not terribly attractive. And I assumed automatically that you weren't complimenting me, but just blowing smoke and karma farming. 🙄”
It's interesting how consistent this pattern tends to be.

Finally, what I’m learning as I write this is that “it's not meaningless to us [INFPs]. 98% of us will take that [compliment] very personally and get a nice esteem boost.”

I still don’t understand why yet, but somebody replied to my inquiry with their input:

“For me personally, this makes me happy simply because I’m not used to receiving compliments regularly.”

I can get behind this, but then I don’t really understand— considering the fact that the compliment cannot possibly be anything but meaningless, by definition— why the fact that I “didn’t mean it” because I posted it to other subreddits changes anything.

My next step is going to be figuring out why this is such a big deal (I’m sure my confusion is littered throughout this paper.) and then how to redo this in a more ethical manner.

Future improvements:

The first thing I did wrong was post to r/INFP last. If I had known how seriously anyone would take such a compliment, I would have posted to r/INFP first and waited a few hours, considering they and r/INTP tend to post the most anyway.

I obviously was not able to post in every subreddit. r/ENTJ will require an alt account for me to post there; I figured r/ESTJ wasn't worth my time; and after posting in r/INFP, I knew too many brigaders were on the prowl to post anywhere else on this account.

r/ENFP's responses are inconclusive since I know many commenters were aware of the "nefarious" "trickery" of "complimenting other types" before they left a response. Same goes for many of the overconfident responses on r/INFP.

In each subreddit, I phrased the question differently. This means that there will be far more variation in response based on the actual words used.

e.g. in r/INTP, I used the word "bloody," as a modifier for the word "attractive," leading to many mosquito jokes in the comments below. In r/ENTP, I made a list, leading to list-like comments.

Also, I began to reveal to people that it was an experiment, meaning that anyone who happened to tap my profile just then would be clued into the fact that I was not being genuine about my compliments. Despite my initial hesitation, my comments did indeed get posted due to the realization that whoever clicks my profile would also see the other questions, anyway, and the experiment was fated to be compromised soon.

In the future, I will conduct this experiment when different people frequent these subreddits, likely use different ("alt") accounts, and perhaps stretch the questions out over a longer period of time with more accounts. Because I know that some people will read this and not forget it and be on the lookout, I will be using Reddit accounts that I have had prepped with a significant posting history so there is little chance anyone will be able to know whether it's my experiment or really someone making a meaningless appreciation post.

The one way this could be prevented is by moderators banning such low-effort posts, similar to r/ENFJ, but considering how many people it makes happy at such low emotional cost to the poster, I doubt this will be enacted or enforced any time soon, leaving the door open for future experimentation.